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ABSTRACT

This digest examines three prominent theories that attempt to explain why women are underrepresented in educational administration and develops a three-dimensional matrix as an empowerment perspective. Each of the theories--resocialization, structural barriers, and male dominance--is based on deficiencies in the woman, the system, or the society. This deficiency perspective is used to identify several factors critical to women's advancement: the degree of compatibility between career orientation and the demands of the position; structural barriers; and organizational fit. A three-dimensional matrix is developed, which requires that a successful administrative aspirant determine three things: (1) which theory or theories apply to that situation; (2) how the critical factors are configured for her with regard to that situation; and (3) which combinations of approaches and actions will work best for her. A conclusion is that societal restructuring and class action are essential, but it is equally important that women know the variables that are within their control. A second article describes publications of model programs funded by the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) Program that help women advance or move into school administration. (LMI)

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WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL EQUITY ACT PUBLISHING CENTER DIGEST
Education Development Center, Inc.
OERI, U.S. Department of Education

Women in school administration

Overcoming the barriers to advancement

It is an interesting commentary on the American workforce that in education, one of the few professions in which women have historically dominated in terms of numbers, women are outnumbered by men four to one at the administrative level. And, up until the last few years, that situation has grown steadily worse rather than better. In the years between 1928 and 1984, the number of women principals continually dropped from 55 percent to 18 percent.[1] This mirrors a similar drop in the representation of women throughout educational administration as a whole. While a recent survey of school superintendents indicates that the number of women at all levels of school administration is now slowly increasing, women's representation in school administration is still far from proportionate to their representation in all of education.[2]

The lack of proportional representation of women combines with an even greater lack of representation by people of color in administration. This makes the picture for women of color even more gloomy. A U.S. Department of Education survey released in 1988 showed that 96 percent of superintendents are male and 97 percent are white. And principals are 76 percent male and 90 percent white. All of these statistics stand as evidence of a system that works against the advancement of those candidates who are not white males.

Our understanding about career socialization and advancement in administration has been based almost exclusively on the experience of men. Women's experience has traditionally been explained by comparing it against theories derived from male experience, with women found wanting when these theories didn't work. In order to investigate women's advancement in school administration, we must recognize that, as Carol Gilligan has described, women's personal development is different than that of men's. Women's experience in school administration cannot be accurately described by looking at it through the lens of male development. Fortunately, research has been done in recent years that documents the unique experience of women in school administration. We can now begin to describe the factors that affect women's entry into and advancement through administrative careers in education.

Women's experience in school administration cannot be accurately described by looking at it through the lens of male development.

Research theories

Researchers have identified three distinct theories to explain why women are not represented in administration in proportional numbers. According to the first approach, women are inherently unsuited to administrative work due to their early socialization, and need to be resocialized to perform more effectively in administrative roles. The second approach emphasizes the structural

This issue of the *WEEA Digest* is the second in a series of quarterly releases prepared by the WEEA Publishing Center at Education Development Center. Each issue contains an overview of a particular topic that has implications for educational equity and highlights resources developed through WEEA grants that provide additional information on the subject. During the coming year we are planning issues devoted to girls in math and science and highlights from visits made to current WEEA projects. We invite you to offer suggestions for coming issues and to share with us names of anyone to add to our mailing list.

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barriers of organizations that prevent women from advancing. The third approach looks to male dominance in society at large as the barrier to women's advancement.[3]

All three theories are rooted in the concept of a culture of school administration that defines who is an appropriate candidate for an administrative position. Workplace culture, as the system of roles, rules, and relationships that define a cohesive group,[4] dictates socialization processes, defines who is suitable for what roles, and decides what characteristics constitute a good "fit" between an individual and a job.

. . . successful women administrators subvert or go around the usual socialization processes and find alternative methods.

Resocialization

This approach begins with the assumption that school administration is a separate career from teaching, not an extension of it.[5] Thus, entry into school administration requires a resocialization process. C. Marshall's study of women administrators illustrates this strand of theory.[6] She found that successful women administrators subvert or go around the usual socialization processes and find alternative methods. Yet she points out that career socialization for school administrators in general is characterized by informality, ambiguity, and role conflict.

Marshall found that in a male-stereotyped role, such as that of school administrator, women must pass through a special socialization process. In doing so, they experience conflict between traditional roles of women and the career demands and informal job criteria of administrative positions. She labeled this conflict "female career role stress." The specialized socialization process that women must pass through has three definable stages: cultural definition, transition, and self-definition. She also found a relationship between the stage of career socialization, and the level of anxiety that women experience. Where the position a woman holds is appropriate to her level of career socialization, she operates with comfort; where there is a discrepancy between career socialization and position held, the woman experiences anxiety. Schwartz describes career conflict for management women as a continuum that runs from total dedication to job at one end and to a balance between career and family at the other, with neither extreme acceptable to the male corporate culture.[7] The dilemma that women in school administration face is similar.

Structural barriers

The work of F. Ortiz is illustrative of the structural barriers approach to looking at women's advancement. Ortiz views women's advancement as a problem of mobility. Three types of boundaries must be crossed. Hierarchical boundaries separate the various levels in the school organization, and are usually differentiated by formal requirements such as degrees and certifications. Functional boundaries separate different departments or divisions of the school system from one another, such as elementary and secondary principals. Finally, the inclusion boundaries differentiate individuals by their position within the organization relative to the center of power. The latter are the most difficult to cross, since crossing them involves negotiating informal processes, a much more difficult task. So advancement is described as a matter of crossing many kinds of boundaries, from the periphery of the organization to the center, from the bottom of the hierarchy to the top. In this interpretation, the problems for women are not the formal, tangible barriers like education or certification, but the intangible, informal ones that require an aspirant to be accepted as "one of us" by those already at the apex of the organization.

Such acceptance is usually acquired through successful performance in the proper sequence of positions. Taking the wrong career path, such as being a specialist rather than a principal, can dead end an administrative aspirant. Since women's career paths are typically much more circuitous than men's, the danger exists that they may be funneled into low-opportunity, dead-end positions. These positions allow them neither the opportunity to develop the skills necessary for advancement, nor the opportunity to demonstrate those skills that they do have.[8]

Male dominance theory

In spite of more than thirty years of data to the contrary, the myth remains that the ideal manager conforms to a masculine stereotype: self-reliant, forceful, ambitious, and a strong leader.[9] Because of this belief, positions that are seen as managerial are still stereotyped as "masculine." The inherent contradiction is that as long as women remain in the minority in management circles, the male stereotype of management will endure, and the women who are in management positions will feel pressured to behave like men. And when female managers adopt male behaviors, the male stereotype of the ideal manager is reinforced, and the dominance of the male stereotype is sustained.[10]

This male stereotype continues to dominate in part because the notion of "fit" is a critical criterion often used in the selection of school administrators. Both schools and communities have held deeply rooted ideas of what a principal should be. A successful candidate has to fulfill this vague criterion, which, in many instances, outweighs more specific criteria such as credentials and instructional leadership skills. This criterion has worked heavily against women, who typically do not embody the traditionally held ideas about what a leader should look or act like.[11]

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Some recent approaches to management style seem to favor "feminine" characteristics rather than "masculine" ones. "Theory Z" and participatory approaches to management emphasize qualities that are associated with the female stereotype. And research has exhibited findings that are either neutral towards or more favorable to a "women's" style of management. J. M. Frasher and R. S. Frasher have collected data reaching back thirty years that indicate that

there have been no differences in the administrative performances of men and women, and G. N. Powell et al.'s data shows that women have been more effective.[12] At the University of California, L. Khantak's early findings in a California study indicate that women are now being appointed more frequently to principalships because the desired approach to management has shifted away from the traditional male stereotype to a more people-orientated, curriculum-centered, consensus-driven style more typical of women. But statistics also show the continued dominance of the male stereotype in management. In spite of a growing preference for female approaches to school administration, men continue to be selected in the majority of cases.

Overcoming barriers to advancement

If these theories are correct—and study after study indicates that they are—the resolution of the problem is clear: change the culture of school administration to remove the barriers that limit opportunities for women and accommodate a broader range of career socialization experiences. Yet, all of these theories are based on deficiencies: in women, in the system, and in society. While we must understand this "deficiency perspective," this understanding does little to empower women or help them strategize to move ahead. Using this perspective, however, we can identify several factors critical to women's advancement, and we can begin to move from a deficiency to an empowerment perspective.

Three critical factors

The three strands of research that we've examined highlight critical factors in the advancement of women in administration. The first is the degree of compatibility between the woman's career orientation and the demands of the position she holds. This factor describes the extent to which a woman's perception of herself is constrained by cultural stereotypes of female behavior. While some women manage the transition from "cultural definition" to "self-definition" effectively and experience success in roles traditionally held by men, this is nearly always a stressful transition period.[13]

The second factor, structural barriers, comprises the formal and informal filtering system that organizations use to train and test the suitability of an aspirant for a particular position and control upward mobility. While some women apparently negotiate the barriers successfully, we know that, overall, women have less access to the informal experiences and socialization processes that facilitate movement through the barriers.

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The third factor, organizational fit, emerges naturally from the other two. It refers to the congruence between an individual in a particular role and the particular organization's idealized notion of the individual in that role. Because organizational cultures vary, the ideal administrator in one school or school system may not be the same as that in another. While the structures and attitudes that support male dominance in school administration prevail nationwide, individual schools or school systems may be more or less receptive to the advancement of women.

Based on the three strands of research, and on these critical advancement factors that they highlight, we can begin to design new approaches to female advancement. The traditional approaches to battling gender-based job discrimination have been affirmative action programs and legal challenges.[14] While both affirmative action and litigation are powerful and necessary tools for fighting sex discrimination, women cannot rely solely upon such global approaches to assist them in their career advancement. Both affirmative action and litigation work slowly, and often in tandem. And, in addition, litigation is costly, and the costs are not only monetary. The woman who brings action against an employer or prospective employer may win the case, but may bear unpleasant consequences to her career. The successful individual litigant in a sex discrimination case may find her mobility blocked once she has the job for which she successfully litigated. Class action is a more effective and reasonable approach. But class action may not meet the immediate career needs of individual women.

Another approach that has been emphasized is mentoring. Women administrators often feel they have an extra responsibility to other women aspiring to administration. Again, female-to-female mentoring is a valuable element in a total approach to female administrative advancement, but it is beset with problems as well. First, in our current situation, the number and distribution of female administrators is inadequate to provide mentoring to all those female administrative aspirants who could or should receive it. Second, depending on a female-to-female mentoring model may result in the development of a parallel network for women, which doesn't erode the structural barriers and cultural attitudes that support male dominance in school administration.

In spite of a growing preference for female approaches to school administration, men continue to be selected in the majority of cases.

To work for systemic change, women in higher administrative positions need to mentor men as well as women, but mentor them in ways that render the "old boys'" network extinct. Newer male principals tend to be more receptive to women as administrators, and they are often in a position to mentor female teachers who wish to move into administrative careers. And the rapidly increasing number of female assistant superintendents, the position in which the percentage of women is growing the fastest, creates greater opportunity for women to mentor the male principals who work for them. Successful female-to-male mentoring creates the opportunity for changed male attitudes toward women administrators and contributes to the demise of exclusionary advancement structures for either men or women. This expanded concept of mentoring can be an effective strategy for enhancing

Continued on p. 5

Administration highlighted in WEEA materials

Women interested in educational administration still face numerous obstacles in this male-dominated profession. Strategies for overcoming those hurdles range from mentoring to increasing self-esteem and assertiveness skills to developing specific job skills and strategies. The Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) Program, a grant program managed by the Department of Education, funds a variety of model programs that address issues such as this. The WEEA Program remains the only federal program that funds projects to increase equity for women and girls in education. And over the last thirteen years, the program has supported a number of projects that help women move into or advance in school administration.

For instance, a 1989 project in Amarillo, Texas, run by the Panhandle Council of Women School Executives, designed and conducted a mentoring program for women in the Panhandle region. In this model program, women who currently hold administrative positions mentor women who want to enter or move up in administration. Already, several of the participants have entered administrative positions, including one woman who now is one of the few Latina principals in the region.

Mentoring has proven to be a very successful method for helping women learn skills and develop a professional network. Just-released *Executive Mentoring: Myths, Issues, Strategies*, by N. Mertz, O. Welch, and J. Henderson, is an easy-to-read booklet that raises the questions that mentors must ask themselves. It looks at how mentoring can help an organization and the considerations involved in establishing an organizationwide mentoring program.

The SEEL (Sex Equity in Educational Leadership) Project, developed by the Center for Educational Policy and Management at the University of Oregon, was a three-year project designed to work to encourage women in administration in Oregon. One of the manuals they developed, *Women Getting Together and Getting Ahead*, is designed for women who are considering a career in administration. It guides the reader through a series of exploratory and skill-building exercises that will help her learn more about the profession and herself. Two other manuals developed by the project, *The Oregon Story* and *An Analysis of a Planned Social Change Project*, describe the project and its impact.

Another WEEA product that encourages women and people of color into administration was developed by Elizabeth Hatch and Robert Foley in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. *A Guide to Developing Educational Leadership Potential* describes a program that includes a number of pieces: an experiential or mentoring component, a cognitive component, and a skill-building component. The manual also includes chapters on management of the program, the developers' experiences in the five pilot sites, and sample instruments and timelines.

Although some skills needed for educational administration are specific to the profession, many of those needed are shared by women who seek other kinds of managerial positions. *Management Basics for Minority Women*, developed by Stanlie M. Jackson of Drake University, offers a workshop modeled to assist women of color to develop and improve skills such as basic managerial techniques, an awareness of social and interpersonal dynamics facing women of color in employment, decision making, and communication and interaction with others.

And while professional skill development is critical to a woman's career success, equally important is a positive self-image, self-understanding, and the ability to take control of her situation. Lorraine Rea's *The Woman Within* lays out a workshop designed to help women do just that. In eight 2-hour sessions, participants work through such issues as the importance of a positive self-image, putting yourself in control, and honest communication.

Creating an equitable environment in educational administration cannot happen without developing an equitable educational climate throughout the school system. *Becoming Sex Fair: The Tredyffrin/Easttown Program* is a guide to developing and implementing a districtwide program to improve sex-fairness. Specific components address how to work with teachers, counselors, parents, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and personnel policies.

Expanding Options, by the Center for Studies of the Person, is a nine-volume set of materials that contains resources and instructions for conducting sex-equity workshops for the entire educational community: administrators, teachers, students, parents, counselors, and support staff. The coordinator's guide provides information on the development of the model and the evaluation design. It also lists important resources.

Toward Equity: Effective Title IX Strategies K–Postsecondary is a comprehensive program developed by the California Coalition for Sex Equity in Education that works in a systemic way to move schools towards a sex-fair environment. The book provides basic insights into the equity movement and sex equity in education, and then presents strategies and techniques for working with audiences that range from school personnel to community members.

In a recent WEEA Publishing Center publication, *The Hidden Discriminator: Sex and Race Bias in Educational Research*, by Patricia B. Campbell, the notion of research and researchers as a bastion of impartiality is challenged. Campbell looks at the effects of bias in research on programs and decision making. The monograph comes with a series of pamphlets addressed to various educational audiences, including adminis-

Continued on p. 5

"WEEA has supported numerous projects to increase the access of women to positions in educational administration. Some projects trained aspiring women educators, while others influenced superintendents, university presidents, and local school boards to encourage their active support for Title IX and sex equity."

—Citizens Council on Women's Education, "Catching Up: A Review of the WEEA Program

Women in school administration . . . continued

the advancement of individual women and for women as a group.

Maximizing women's advancement opportunities

When we juxtapose the critical factors for advancement with strategies for overcoming barriers, and then superimposed them on the theories explaining women's failure to advance in school administration, a three-dimensional matrix results. This matrix, similar to a Rubik's Cube, requires that a successful administrative aspirant determine three things: (1) which theory or theories seem to apply in a particular situation, (2) how the critical factors are configured for her with regard to the particular situation, and, given her conclusions on the first two points, (3) which combination of approaches and actions will work best for her.

Societal restructuring and class action are essential, but it is equally important that women know the variables that are within their ability to control.

The successful aspirant strategizes to make herself the right person in the right place at the right time. This technique does not rely on luck: a woman can increase her chances of being in this position by conscious and deliberate planning around the factors of structural barriers, role compatibility, and organizational fit. An awareness of critical factors can assist a female aspirant in analyzing her current situation, and in developing career actions that she can use in pursuit of her career goals.

Both literature and women's experience document the barriers that impede women's progress, and the kinds of societal restructuring and class action that must be undertaken if true change is to come about. While these actions are essential, it is equally important that women know the variables within their ability to control that they can use to further their career advancement. By gaining these tools, women can increase their potential for achieving career goals and for advancing from within the culture of school administration toward inclusion and gender-free opportunity.

Kathleen Kelley Lynch
Assistant Superintendent
Exeter, New Hampshire

Notes

[1] J. R. Feldman, M. Jorgensen, and E. Poling, "Illusions: Women in Educational Administration," in *Sex Equity in Education: Readings and Strategies*, ed. by A. O'Brien Carelli (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1988), p. 336.

[2] E. H. Jones and X. T. Montenegro, *Women and Minorities in School Administration* (Arlington, Va.: American Association of School Administrators, 1988).

[3] E. Hansot and D. Tyack, *The Dream Deferred: A Golden Age for Women in School Administration* (Stanford, Calif.: Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, 1981).

[4] Corbett, *On the Meaning of Restructuring* (Philadelphia: Better School Research, 1990); M. R. Louis, "An Investigator's Guide to Workplace Culture," in *Organizational Culture*, ed. by P. J. Frost et al. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1985).

[5] F. Ortiz and C. Marshall, "Women in Educational Administration," in *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration*, ed. by N. J. Boyam (New York: Longman, 1988).

[6] C. Marshall, "The Career Socialization of Women in School Administration," unpublished dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1979.

[7] F. N. Schwartz, "Management Women and the New Facts of Life," *Harvard Business Review* 89, no. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1989): 68.

[8] R. M. Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

[9] J. M. Frasher and R. S. Frasher, "Educational Administration: A Feminine Profession," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1979); G. N. Powell, "Career Development and the Woman Manager: A Social Power Perspective," *Personnel* (May–June 1980): 22–33; G. N. Powell, *Women and Men in Management* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1988); K. Whitaker and K. Lane, "Is a Woman's Place in School Administration?" *School Administration* 47, no. 2 (February 1990): 8–12.

[10] G. N. Powell, *Women and Men in Management*.

[11] D. C. Baltzell and R. A. Dentler, *Selecting American School Principals: Research Report* (Cambridge, Mass.: Abt Associates, 1983).

[12] J. M. Frasher and R. S. Frasher, "Educational Administration"; G. N. Powell et al., "Sex Effects on Managerial Value Systems," *Human Relations* 37, no. 11 (1984).

[13] C. Marshall, "The Career Socialization of Women in School Administration."

[14] C. Shakeshaft, *Women in Educational Administration* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1986); C. Marshall, "The Career Socialization of Women"; C. Marshall and B. Mitchell, "Women's Careers as a Critique of the Administrative Culture," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, 1989.

Admin. highlighted in WEEA ma[illegible]ials . . . continued

trators and teachers. The straightforward discussion and guidelines enable administrators to look at how research influences their actions and decisions and ways to evaluate research methods and conclusions.

Two publications developed by the University Council on Educational Administration with WEEA funds will assist those interested in examining and removing barriers to women, particularly at the postsecondary level. *Overcoming Sex Disequity in Educational Administration* is a guide to assessing barriers, and *Directory of Minority and Women Professors of Educational Administration* lists women and people of color in departments of educational administration.

Below is a selected list of publications developed with funds from the Women's Educational Equity Act Program, available from the WEEA Publishing Center unless otherwise noted. WEEA Publishing Center materials may be purchased by mailing a check or money order for the amount of the order (plus $2 shipping for orders under $25; $4 for orders $25 or over) to the WEEA Publishing Center. To order by phone, using MasterCard, Visa, or purchase orders over $25, or for information on additional resources available through the WEEA Publishing Center, call 800-225-3088 (in Massachusetts call 617-969-7100).

Executive Mentoring: Myths, Issues, Strategies, by N. Mertz, O. Welch, and J. Henderson, University of Tennessee identifies and describes the nature of mentoring from the perspective of the mentor. Chapters include "Why Mentor?" "Selecting the Protégé," "Beginning and Ending the Mentoring Relationship," "Mentoring Women and Minorities," and "Establishing an Organizational Mentoring Program." ***(#2712 $8.00)***

Continued on p. 6

Administration highlighted in WEEA materials . . . continued

The Hidden Discriminator: Sex and Race Bias in Educational Research, by Patricia B. Campbell, Campbell-Kibler Associates
An in-depth examination of stereotypes and bias present in educational research. Explores the hidden effects of bias on decision making and program design. In language both lively and readable, Campbell describes the problems that exist and offers easy-to-follow guidelines for evaluating research and using results. Includes pamphlets specifically addressed to administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and students. ***(#2691 complete set $15.50)***

★ ***Special Price*** ★

Sex Equity in Educational Leadership (SEEL), by Patricia A. Schmuck, University of Oregon
Three volumes that propose solutions to the low percentage of women administrators in education. *Women Getting Together and Getting Ahead* guides women through a history of women in administration, a process of evaluating their own goals, and steps to take to enter administration. *The Oregon Story* describes how the plan worked in one state. *An Analysis of a Planned Social Change Project* assesses the results of the Oregon plan and its adaptability potential. ***(2315 complete set, originally $17.25, NOW $9.00)***

A Guide to Developing Educational Leadership Potential, by Elizabeth Hatch and Robert Foley
Presents a management skills program of workshops, challenging problems, and suggestions for hands-on training that encourages women and people of color to succeed in educational administration. ***(#2102 $4.50)***

Management Basics for Minority Women, by Stanlie M. Jackson, Drake University
Although many women of color aspire to managerial positions, few management training programs adequately address these women's needs or the social dynamics affecting women of color in the workplace. This manual outlines a six-session, fourteen-hour workshop designed to prepare participants for real management decisions—not just as managers, but as women and people of color as well. ***(#2243 $10.00)***

The Woman Within, by Lorraine Rea, South Hills Health System
The eight workshop sessions described in this manual are designed to build women's self-esteem and promote positive behavioral change. Through lively and stimulating activities and homework assignments, the workshops help participants overcome fears, take risks, and identify and eradicate negative patterns. Pre- and postcourse questionnaires help gauge results. ***(#2005 $6.75)***

Becoming Sex Fair: The Tredyffrin/Easttown Program. A Comprehensive Model for Public School Districts, by Marilyn Calabrese, Tredyffrin/Easttown School District
A three-stage, systemwide training program that helps you select, develop, apply, and evaluate techniques for improving sex fairness in schools. The four volumes give an overview of the program and guide you through the stages of change: preparing for change, planning the inservice program, and revising the curriculum. Sample meeting agendas, workshop formats, and other useful resources are provided. ***(#2006 $51.00)***

Expanding Options, by the Center for Studies of the Person
A nine-volume training package for anyone who provides sex-equity training for various groups within the educational community. Facilitator's guides provide step-by-step instructions for conducting workshops for each group, and a coordinator's guide details how to coordinate the workshops within the educational community. ***(#2532 complete set $222.00; #2537 administrator workshop with coordinator's guide $15.75)***

Toward Equity: Effective Title IX Strategies K–Postsecondary, by the California Coalition for Sex Equity in Education
Provides unique strategies for navigating through all the practical, philosophical, and theoretical problems of the Title IX regulations. Contains detailed suggestions for integrating Title IX with existing school systems, and includes a valuable list of equity resources. ***(#2195 $13.50)***

Directory of Minority and Women Professors of Educational Administration

Overcoming Sex Disequity in Educational Administration, by the University Council on Educational Administration
The directory lists key contacts in educational administration. *Overcoming Sex Disequity* is a guide to assessing barriers that may prevent women from entering administration. Both are available from the University Council on Educational Administration, 116 Farmer Building, Tempe, AZ 85287-2211, 602-965-6690.

Women's Educational Equity Act Publishing Center
Education Development Center, Inc.

55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02160
1-800-225-3088/617-969-7100

Director: Katherine Hanson
Managing Editor: Sundra Flansburg
Marketing Coordinator: Heidi Lynch
Production Coordinator: Anne McAuliffe
Publication Associate: Sonja Latimore
Word Processor: Cynthia Newson

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